DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 062 115 SE 013 439

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TITLE The Community of Life.
PUB DATE Oct 71
NOTE 4p.; Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of The Humane Society, Newport, Rhode Island, October 1971

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Ecology; Ethical Values; *Humanism; *Interagency Cooperation; Organizations (Groups); Preservation; Responsibility; *Speeches; *Wildlife Management

ABSTRACT

Anthony Wayne Smith, President, National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), delivered this address before the Annual Meeting of The Humane Society of the United States, Newport, Rhode Island, October, 1971. Reviewing the philosophy and activities of the NPCA, he discloses how the wildlife preservation movement of the NPCA needs the help of the humane movement to protect wild animals for their own sake, for scientific, aesthetic, and educational purposes, and for the enjoyment and appreciation of people who care for animals. Dangers facing wildlife, endangered plant species, and pressures of a rising human population are also considered as part of man's concern, responsibility, and respect for all life. He must recreate his sense of the community of life, of the interrelationship of all living things. Cooperation between humane and conservation movements for common causes is, therefore, advocated with each lending the other increasing support in the years ahead. To this end man must build up coalitions, submerging individual differences, to cope strongly with environmental matters. (BL)

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THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

An address delivered by Anthony Wayne Smith, President and General Counsel, National Parks and Conservation Association and Chairman, Environmental Coalition for North America, before the Annual Meeting of The Humane Society of the United States at Newport, Rhode Island, on October 16, 1971. Mr. John A. Hoyt is President of The Humane Society of the United States. He is the member from the HSUS of the Steering Committee of the Environmental Coalition for North America.

IT WAS WITH A feeling of deep gratitude that I received and accepted the invitation to speak to the Humane Society of the United States on this occasion.

The preservation of wildlife everywhere, which is one of the major purposes of the National Parks and Conservation Association, and the furtherance of humane attitudes toward animals generally, which is the major purpose of the Humane Society of the United States, are closely related and mutually supportive activities.

The NPCA and the HSUS should undertake to work together increasingly; we should have done so long ago, and perhaps the present mortal crisis in which all life on earth finds itself at this time can bring us rapidly together.

I shall be speaking to you as President and General Counsel of the NPCA, except insofar as I may touch on questions involving legislation, in respect to which I have no authority from NPCA to comment, except where invited officially by Congress, but I shall speak on such matters either as Chairman of the Environmental Coalition for North America, where I am not under comparable inhibitions, or as an individual.

THE NATIONAL PARKS and Conservation Association was founded in 1919 at the behest of Stephen T. Mather, the first Director of the National Park Service, with a view to assisting the Service in enlarging and protecting the National Park System. It has functioned over the intervening years in a supportive capacity to the Service, but also as a constructive critic. It has a membership of nearly 55,000 people in the United States and abroad; it publishes National Parks and Conservation Magazine, the Environmental Journal, received by all members. While it retains its primary interest in the Parks, it has broadened its responsibilities over the years to include the entire environmental field. It shares the humane purposes of the Humane Society of the United States.

The Environmental Coalition consists of individuals associated with but not necessarily representing most of the major conservation organizations of America and several of the more powerful labor organizations. The major farm organizations have also joined with us from time to time in one relationship or another, where there was common ground. The Coalition has a Steering Committee, of which I am Chairman, and of which your President is a very welcome member. I am quite certain that this relationship will prove valuable, indeed indispensable, as the environmental movement grows and strengthens itself in the United States and abroad.

The major purpose of the National Park System is the protection of large areas of the original natural country of North America for its scenic, wildlife and recreational value. This protection is to be accompanied by the enjoyment of the Parks by people, and hence the Parks are to be accessible, but enjoyment must be by methods which are compatible with the preservation of natural conditions and wildlife.

The Parks have been heavily overcrowded in recent years because our population has been growing, people have been traveling more, and there is a great need on their part to escape the unlivable conditions which are so prevalent in our big cities.

The NPCA has proposed a strategy for dealing with overcrowding in the Parks, particularly crowding by automobiles, which is much more dangerous than crowding by people. We have recommended that the Parks be protected largely as wilderness without roads, permanent structures, or mechanized equipment. We have recommended that more campgrounds be developed in the national forests which surround most of the Parks, in the public domain, by the Indians on the reservations if they desire, and on private land outside the public lands.

We propose that facilities in the Parks, such as roads, lodges and campgrounds be stabilized at present levels and perhaps gradually reduced. Long distance access to the Parks would be provided by motor coaches traveling over the existing roads. Concessions would be granted to consortiums of private resort operators outside the Parks to run the coaches.

The proposed system would require interdepartmental planning in the federal government, and cooperation between the state and federal governments, but the President could initiate the system without further legislation.

THESE PROPOSALS have been placed before all the responsible agencies in the Executive branch. They usually get polite approval, but nobody ever does anything. The Environmental Coalition for North America will be taking combined action to push this issue. We need the help of the humane movement to put it across.

The NPCA works continually for the preservation of wilderness throughout America. The major part of most of the big National Parks should be preserved as wilderness. We support the permanent protection of wilderness in the National Forests and the Wildlife Refuges as well. Indeed, wilderness is a thing to be preserved wherever it survives; there is little enough of it left in America.

Wilderness should be protected for its own sake. It is part of the natural setting of human life. The magnificent scenery of the National Parks should be preserved as wilderness. Within the roadless and unsettled country which we call wilderness the wild animals have their last best chance of survival. We need the help of the humane movement in our efforts to protect wilderness throughout America, indeed, throughout the world, and in our efforts to protect the Parks.

The National Parks are among the finest of our wildlife refuges. As the National Park System spread from the original idea in Yellowstone 100 years ago to other countries all over the world, it often served mainly for wildlife survival purposes.

The NPCA is concerned with the protection of the National Park System from the scenic, recreational and historical points of view, but also from the point of view of wilderness preservation, and very basically with respect to wildlife protection and enjoyment.

THROUGH THE National Parks and Conservation Magazine, we try to further an attitude toward wildlife which is one of appreciation, not exploitation. Great numbers of people wish to view wildlife in its natural habitat where it is not frightened. Wildlife photography is a major sport.

The wildlife preservation movement needs the help of the humane movement to protect wild animals for their own sake, for scientific, aesthetic, and educational purposes, and for the enjoyment and appreciation of people who care for animals.

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The NPCA has a primary concern with preventing the extinction of animal species in the United States and all over the world. The lists of endangered species maintained by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and by the Department of the Interior are frightening in their length.

The big predators, the wolf, the cougar, the grizzly, the polar bear, in the United States, and elsewhere such long-familiar characters in all our lives as the lion and the tiger, and in the seas the whales and other oceanic mammals: these and countless other life forms are in great danger.

National Parks and Conservation Magazine runs one major endangered species article every month. We have a list of articles in preparation which looks ahead several years. If we were to publish such articles for a decade we would hardly begin to cover the subject of endangered species.

We try not merely to explain the importance of the animal in question and the perilous situation in which it finds itself, but to relate the danger to the economic and social background of the problem, and to propose practical measures for survival. This is most certainly a humane issue, and we need the help of the humane movement in getting this work done.

One of the basic principles of National Parks management which the NPCA has always supported vigorously is that there should be no sports hunting in the National Parks. This is the established interpretation of the National Park Service Act, and a number of the specific National Parks Acts contain express prohibitions. The NPCA has had to do battle with the National Park Service and with the state fish and game commissioners on this issue on occasion in the past. We need the help of the humane movement in such efforts.

About ten years ago the state fish and game commissioners attempted to get sports hunting established in Yellowstone National Park as what was referred to as a management tool to reduce the excessive populations of elk. The elk had multiplied beyond control as a result of the virtual elimination of the big predators and bad game management practices in surrounding states. The vegetation in the Parks was being destroyed, and everyone agreed that the elk herds must be reduced. We opposed the use of sports hunters as so-called deputies for this purpose; as a result, a special Commission was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior which recommended against hunting; and the day was saved.

We are engaged right now in a similar battle with the National Park Service and hunters' organizations to prevent the use of sports hunting to eliminate feral goats from the Hawaiian National Parks. The original native plant and animal communities of Hawaii were subjected to great stress when the white man arrived, bringing his domestic animals with him and many exotic species of plants and animals from all over the world. A number of beautiful birds and many kinds of important plants became extinct. The domestic goat was one of the worst of the invaders, destroying vegetation, and with it the birds and other creatures dependent upon it. We take the position that the feral goat must be eliminated from the Parks; it should not be perpetuated in the Parks for the entertainment of hunters; hunters should not be allowed to shoot goats in the Parks for sport under the guise of management by deputy rangers.

THESE ARE ISSUES on which there may be divisions of opinion between the humane movement and the conservation movement from time to time, but in respect to which we should strive for closer understanding, because our purposes of humane treatment for animals and the survival of species are basically identical.

The conservation movement includes people with different attitudes toward hunting. You might say that most of the conservation organizations include hunters, non-hunters, pro-hunters, and anti-hunters. The movement as a whole does not oppose regulated hunting on public lands other than state and National Parks, nor on private land. There is virtually unanimous agreement among all the organizations against sports hunting in the National Parks; we need the help of the humane organizations in maintaining this position.

Regardless of their attitudes toward hunting, conservation organizations unite in the effort to preserve the natural habitat for wild animals against encroachment by urban, industrial, and other development. This means, for instance, fighting against wetlands drainage. The problems of cooperation and coalition among people with different viewpoints on a number of issues must be resolved if the conservation, environmental, and humane movements are to be effective. A measure of charity and tolerance for different viewpoints is essential if the necessary strength is to be assembled. I believe you can count on practically unanimous support from the organizations in the environmental movement for the humane programs you favor.

PERHAPS THE GREATEST danger for wildlife is the loss of habitat. Farms and cities are closing in on the natural country of the planet everywhere. The human population is growing, and human demands on space are increasing even faster. The need is very great to enlarge the National Park Systems of all countries of the world and the Systems of equivalent reserves such as national forests, wildlife refuges, and protected recreation areas. Here again the humane and conservation movements should be working together.

Another of the major dangers for wildlife is the abuse of pesticides. This means insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, rodenticides, and straight wildlife poisons. Agriculture has come to be heavily dependent on chemical insecticides and other pesticides. The so-called hard pesticides build up in the food chain from the smaller herbivores to the larger carnivores and predators, including birds like the eagle, and predators like man. Some carry sterility, deformity, and cancer as they accumulate. The insects are becoming immune.

We need to get over from hard pesticides to the so-called soft pesticides, which do not build up in the food chain, and then as rapidly as possible to biological controls. The alfalfa weevil, for example, will probably be controlled by parasitic wasps. This massive changeover will be a very difficult thing to accomplish, technically and economically; conservationists greatly need the help of the humane movement in these efforts.

The abuses of insecticides which have been standard in the United States were promoted vigorously by several of the agencies in the Department of Agriculture. The agricultural chemical companies are known to have exercised an undue influence in a number of programs of the Department. These operations have now been transferred to the Environmental Protection Agency in part. The environmental movement, including the humane movement, should now unite in monitoring the work of the EPA, and any residual activities in the Department of Agriculture to cut down on the abuse of pesticides sharply.

WILDLIFE IS POISONED deliberately by the Government throughout the range land of the West. The program is primarily for the supposed benefit of the sheepmen. It is aimed to a considerable extent against the coyote, but it results in colossal destruction of wildlife of all kinds. The infamous chemical 1080 is one of the main poisons, but there are many; when the coyotes are poisoned, other wildlife feeds on the carcasses, and the poisons, which are persistent, build up in the food chain. The poisoning practice has grown up in the federal government over decades; it is an undeserved and unnecessary subsidy to a special interest; there are other ways of protecting the legitimate interests of sheepmen.

But basically, for our purposes today, the practice is inhumane; men cannot afford to indulge in such cruelty; it reflects a callousness toward life which may be the greatest of all dangers to modern man himself. This is a place where conservationists in the narrow sense must join hands with the humane movement, and all must work together to put an end to these barbaric activities.

The restoration of predatory animals should be another common cause for the humane and conservation movements. One of the reasons why the direct reduction of excess game populations has been necessary at times even in the National Parks is the loss of the predators. The wolf maintains a perilous existence in small numbers in balance with moose in Isle Royale National Park. It survives in the great open spaces of Canada and Alaska. It is a beautiful and affectionate animal and presents no great danger to man; if it can be reestablished in our parks and forests, in suitable regions, it should be. It can help to keep the browsing animals in check; the predators should be allowed to pick up their ancient responsibility for culling the ungulate herds. The humane movement could help the conservation movement on this issue.

The same is to be said, of course, for the cougar. The cougar should be a completely protected animal, except in the rare cases where an individual has come to prey continuously on livestock. Bounties for the killing of all forms of wildlife should be eliminated, and certainly with respect to predators. Compensatory payments for losses to sheepmen and cattlemen should be substituted. The conservation and humane organizations need to be working closely together to restore the predators, not only throughout America but throughout the world.

When people talk about the endangered animal species of the world there is much excellent emphasis on turtles, marine mammals, birds, big and little cats, wolves, ferrets, and so forth. Some of these animals are quite spectacular, and people were brought up to think about them as part of the world.

THE INSECTS HAVE A harder time. Many entomologists seem to regard insects mainly as something to be destroyed. An insect is always thought of as a pest. All this is dangerous and absurd; the butterflies, the crickets, the katydids, the bees, are invaluable and irreplaceable parts of the natural pattern of the world; they give us color and beauty and music. Where insects do serious damage they will probably be controlled in the future to a reasonable extent by the use of other insects; beyond that they should usually be let alone.

Meanwhile, a great many of them hover on the verge of extinction, through the abuse of pesticides and the loss of food and habitat, and the conservation and humane movements ought to be working together to stem this tide of destruction, to rescue the endangered species, and to restore the insects and the spiders to a safe place in the community of life.

The fate of wildlife throughout the world depends to a considerable degree on the way the forests are managed. In the NPCA we insist that timber harvesting should be conducted by methods which preserve the soil, watersheds, wildlife, and recreational and scenic values. This cannot be done, in our opinion, if the presently prevailing methods of large-block clear-cutting continue. Moreover these methods are usually accompanied by re-seeding, preceded by wide-spread use of poisoned grain to destroy the small rodents of the fields and woods which otherwise eat the tree seeds which are often dropped by airplane. The birds of course also eat the poisoned grain.

SUCH BRUTAL METHODS are not only inhumane but are also unecological. Forests do not have to be managed in this fashion; there are other methods, such as individual tree selection, group selection, shelterwood, and small-patch clear-cutting which ought to be followed if our purpose is the genuine multiple-use of the forests and if our methods are to be both ecological and humane.

The humane movement has everything to gain by joining in these efforts; among the first considerations in the humane treatment of animals must certainly be the protection of the natural home country of wild animals, which is so largely in the forests.

YOU MAY BE AWARE that there has been some scientific experimentation done in recent years on the question whether plants have feelings, such as anxiety and relief. The experiments seem to have been rather carefully controlled. They suggest an affirmative answer; such an answer would not be incompatible with an organic philosophy like that of Whitehead. A suspension of judgment is required in the scientific spirit. You may find the field of your humane responsibilities considerably enlarged.

In any event, a feeling of concern and responsibility for all life everywhere is part of the outlook of any fully civilized person; the notion that plants feel might well be part of a genuinely humane outlook on life; that outlook is probably what we need to prevent mankind from plunging into murder and suicide by war and pollution.

I have mentioned the forestry interests of the NPCA. A great many environmental organizations have similar interests and outlooks. Related is the problem of the survival of endangered species of plants throughout the world. If the animals are endangered, vast numbers of plant species, from grasses to flowers to forest trees are teetering on the brink of extinction; many of them are already gone.

One way to save the endangered plant species of the world, short of getting human populations down to decent levels, would be to establish seed banks at botanical gardens, museums, and universities, not to speak of National Parks and Forests. Seeds can be gathered and replanted in cycle with their normal viability; many of them can also be frozen, and in that way can be held perhaps for centuries. The financial requirements of a worldwide seed bank program would be relatively small; there has been an enormous inertia, in scientific as well as conservation circles, with respect to the seed bank idea.

The humane movement is concerned, I take it, with respect for life everywhere; if so, and for all the good reasons why the endangered plants should be preserved, it should join with and stimulate the conservation movement into getting something done about seed banks.

No discussion of the ecological situation, hence no discussion of conservation or the humane treatment of animals can be fruitful without at least a reference to the problem of the over-population of the planet; nor, certainly, can any discussion of the economic and military situations of mankind be fruitful without reference to population.

THE HEAVY PRESSURES of rising population resulting from rapidly falling death rates while birth rates remain high are preventing the agricultural countries from achieving the increased agricultural production they need (despite the new grains) and the industrialization they need and desire. The prospect is for many countries to sink into graver poverty, malnutrition, and indeed starvation.

In the rich countries the impact of the population explosion manifests itself in congestion, pollution, disorder, instability, and complexity. The skies and rivers of the industrialized countries are filling with filth. The cities are bound into lunatic traffic patterns which thinking people should reject. The National Parks and Conservation Association advocates

the dissemination of an ethical norm of not more than two children; the adoption of a general standard of this kind would result in the stabilization of population in time and eventually in gradually falling population levels.

The long-range social and ecological results would be enormously beneficial; in any event, the survival of many of the endangered species of plants and animals throughout the world probably depends on getting some kind of population stabilization as rapidly as possible.

The problems of population are complex; they vary from nation to nation; but the conservation and humane movements must educate themselves in these fields, must cooperate to get and keep enough space on this planet for men to live together amicably, and to keep the plants and animals which ought to be part of the natural setting of our lives.

The environmental, humane, and ecological movements (for there are a great many benevolent trends at work in human society these days) converge into a worldwide international effort. The United Nations will be staging three important conferences in the next three years; on the Human Environment in 1972; on the Law of the Sea, dealing with all marine resources, including the animals, in 1973; and on Population in 1974. Out of these meetings, hopefully, will come new inter-governmental institutions for the protection of the environment, including the living resources, plants and animals, and the stabilization and eventual reduction of human population, worldwide.

It is my hope that the Environmental Coalition for North America may play an active part among the non-governmental organizations advisory to these conferences. The conservation and humane organizations of the United States and other countries should be working together through such agencies as the Environmental Coalition to gain and exercise influence in these worldwide deliberations in the years ahead.

The last half dozen years have seen a burst of interest in the protection of the environment. This growth has strengthened the hands of people who were concerned with the humane treatment of animals and who have been struggling to prevent the extinction of plant and animal species.

The interest may well have grown out of the discovery by large numbers of people in the industrial countries that they were about to smother themselves with auto and factory fumes and poison themselves with municipal, industrial, and agricultural wastes.

THE SCIENCE OF ECOLOGY is old. It did not emerge yesterday. And yet, except for the explosion of interest in the human environment, it might have remained obscure for many more decades. But now everyone thinks he understands ecology, and many people do in fact know a great deal about it. Great numbers of people have recaptured a sense of their relationship to all life which was probably universal in savage societies.

And so you can think of the human situation at present as one governed by the ecological imperative; namely, that man must live within the network of all life, or destroy himself. This is essentially a scientific concept; but more than a scientific concept is needed if men are to act in accordance with that concept. Feelings about the matter are needed in addition; and so we need respect for life, but even more, we need to recapture the feeling of love for life.

When the Environmental Coalition, the NPCA, and many of the other organizations associated with the Environmental Coalition protested recently against the proposed nuclear blast at Amchitka, some of us asserted that the humane element in the problem was fundamental. Even if the adverse environmental effects of the explosion turned out to be less serious than supposed, there was none-the-less a moral effect. That great numbers of birds and oceanic mammals would be injured and killed as a result of the blast, there could be no doubt. The result would return against men, because the blast would increase the callousness toward life which is prevalent in our culture. And that callousness may well be one of the major factors moving the world along relentlessly toward atomic and ecological death.

ONE SMALL TURN of conscience in this situation, like adding reverence toward life as a reason for not exploding the bomb at Amchitka, might mark a shift in the moral currents of modern life, might even save the day for mankind. And so we are talking about ecology, but more than ecology. We are dealing with the biological and physical relationships of people to all of the life around them. But we are also talking, when we speak of humanity toward animals, and a concern even for plants, with psychological attitudes on the part of people toward other life which may have much to do with the survival of the human race itself.

The history of the domestication of animals may perhaps be instructive to us. Assuming that the dog first joined the human encampments about 50,000 years ago as a scavenger, later as a watchdog, and eventually as a hunting dog, he was no doubt welcomed and preferred by men for these purposes. The process would have been facilitated by the development of a mutual affection; the more so because women were probably the domesticators of the animals.

Assuming that the cat joined the more settled agricultural human communities about 10,000 years ago after barley and wheat had appeared as the foundation of the early river basin civilizations, with the granaries attracting rats and mice, and with the cat keeping them under control, this process of domestication would also have been facilitated by the development of a mutual affection.

Sir Frank Fraser Darling has described the affectionate relationship of the early Aryan herdsmen toward their cows in their long march into India; this affection arises between any good dairyman and his cows to this day; it led to the cult of the sacred cow.

Natural selection can be visualized as favoring animals with an affection toward people and people with an affection toward animals. The process of domestication, on which civilization was built, can thus be thought of as based on love between men and animals. The survival of mankind in an ecological sense may be dependent on the maintenance of these emotions. Do not be ashamed of basing your environmental programs on the emotion of love for animals.

It has been a great pleasure, and indeed a matter of a certain relief to me, to be able to consult with you here today about the humane movement as part of the conservation movement. In the past, conservationists could speak of animals as something which people enjoyed seeing or photographing in the wild; or as of scientific importance; or as a resource with which hunters and non-hunters had a protective concern; or indeed about wild animals as a supplemental food supply.

I hope that we shall now be speaking throughout the environmental movement about the humane treatment of both domestic and wild animals, and that the humane movement and the conservation movement will lend each other increasing support in the years ahead.

At stake in these times is the survival of all life on earth. The technological powers of mankind have outrun its good sense. Men must recreate their sense of the community of life, of the interrelationships of all living things. They must create the national and international institutions which they will need to cope with overwhelming disorder in environmental matters. And they must build up the coalitions, submerging some of their differences, which will be needed for strength. Divided, we shall fail; working together we shall succeed.